

PRESS RELEASE FROM
PRESIDING OFFICER DUWAYNE GREGORY



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Suffolk Legislature Accepts Climate Action Plan

County already saving \$5 million annually from reduced energy use

RIVERHEAD, N.Y. – The Suffolk County Legislature accepted an aggressive Climate Action Plan last week at its general meeting in Riverhead. The 95-page document will serve as a framework to guide the county's efforts to combat the threat of climate change. Additionally, the plan assessed the county's achievements to date, which include an [estimated \\$5 million](#) in recurring annual savings from reduced energy use.

The product of two years of work, the Climate Action Plan is the embodiment of the commitment made by the Legislature in 2012 when it adopted the [Climate Smart Communities](#) Pledge, an unprecedented partnership between the state and municipalities that addresses both climate mitigation and adaptation. In adopting the pledge, the Legislature acknowledged the "real and increasing threat" climate change poses to Suffolk County's infrastructure, economy, agriculture, ecology, water supply and public health.

"Suffolk County has long been at the forefront of many of the nation's greatest challenges, and climate change is no exception," said Suffolk County Legislature Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory. "Smart energy use is not just an environmental issue; it is an economic one. We are already saving \$5 million every year, and I look forward to continued improvements that will protect both our environment and our tax dollars."

The savings resulted from instituting energy-efficient updates, including heating and cooling systems, in 30 targeted buildings, which dropped the county's energy bill about \$5 million annually. Solar panels have also been installed in six buildings, and new buildings must meet the highest green certification standards. Additionally, greenhouse gas emissions have dropped significantly, with the Climate Action Plan setting a goal of reducing emissions by 20 percent by 2020, using 2005 as a baseline year.

"This is a good news report as it demonstrates that communities that take action to retrofit government facilities as part of the effort to mitigate the release of greenhouse gases that contribute to global climate change, can, in the process, save taxpayer funds by reducing waste," said Neal Lewis, executive director of the Sustainability Institute at Molloy College and one of the Long Island regional coordinators for the Climate Smart Communities program. "Suffolk County should be proud of its leadership on this critical issue. This report is one of the most comprehensive of all the plans being developed by communities across New York State and it sets the stage for additional future actions."

"The Suffolk County Climate Action Plan not only provides a framework for what can be done in the future to decrease Suffolk County's energy use, it also documents the county's past efforts to save and conserve energy," said 1st District Legislator Al Krupski, who chairs the Public Works, Transportation and Energy Committee. "It is important to emphasize the taxpayer savings in order to encourage further investment in these types of energy savings measures. The plan will also serve as a template for other municipalities, businesses and homeowners looking to decrease their energy use and carbon footprint."

The plan, which the [Newsday Editorial Board called on other municipalities to emulate](#), also includes a [proposed incentive program](#) that would help business and homeowners install energy-efficient upgrades through low-cost financing potentially available through the nonprofit organization [Energize NY](#). To read the Climate Action Plan in its entirety, please visit the Sustainability Institute's [website](#). For more information about the Climate Smart Communities program, please visit the Long Island Climate Smart Communities [website](#).

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